

GNSO Council Input on the Meeting Strategy Working Group

First, the GNSO Council apologizes for the delay in submitting these comments to the Meeting Strategy Working Group (MSWG).

Secondly, the GNSO Council would like to compliment the MSWG on its work and recommendations. The GNSO Council recognizes the numerous challenges that have been identified with the current structure and organization of the ICANN meetings, and hopes that our feedback will provide some additional perspectives that may assist in the finalization of the report. The GNSO Council strongly encourages that the comments provided here be viewed in conjunction with the contributions by several of the GNSO Stakeholder Groups (SG) and Constituencies (C) during the public comment forum.

1. The GNSO Council appreciates the recognition of the need to start proposed meetings A and C with at least two days of internal work. This is fully in line with the GNSO Working Sessions, which are currently organized on Saturday and Sunday prior to the official start of the ICANN meeting. The GNSO Council does note that the weekend schedule has become quite busy, as a result of increased topics under consideration within the GNSO, and across ICANN, as well as the desire of GNSO Constituencies and Stakeholder Groups to meet amongst themselves.
2. The GNSO Council shares the concern expressed by several GNSO SG/Cs that a meeting beyond 7 days is simply not feasible, taking into account transit time already required for some locations, as well as the fact that many volunteers are simply not able to take time off from their primary jobs to participate in ICANN.
3. The GNSO Council welcomes the recognition that more time needs to be dedicated to focus on policy development activities. Face to face time is extremely valuable for GNSO working groups to address complex matters. However, having this focus only once a year during the proposed meeting B is simply not sufficient as it could significantly delay the progress of policy development. Additionally, we would encourage you to also include sufficient time for policy development activities in the A and a C meeting, recognizing that policy development is one of the core activities of ICANN.
4. Similarly, the GNSO Council notes that the need for cross community interaction and outreach, is to a large extent, driven by external events such as topics arising that are of cross community interest (for example, the recent announcement on the NTIA transition of IANA functions) which may or may not align with the timing of meeting B. As such, making SO/AC interactions the focus once a year may hamper progress on important topics, particularly if the external event occurs mid-year.
5. Inspired by a suggestion from the Registries Stakeholder Group, the Meeting Strategy Working Group could instead consider dividing the concept of meeting A into streams of interest, both from a concept as well as a topical perspective. For example, days 1 and 2 would be dedicated to internal SO/AC work, day 3 would consist of the opening ceremony in addition to topics of cross-community interest – these topics would be organized into strands to make it easier for participants to identify their strand of main interest as well as avoid conflicts (for example, there could be strands for gTLDs, ccTLDs, security, ICANN operational), day 4 would be dedicated to cross-community interaction, day 5 would focus in the morning on SO/AC public activities such as Council meetings and community updates, while the afternoon would be dedicated to the public forum as

well as board meeting, and day 6 would focus on policy and/or advisory development activities of the different SO/ACs.

6. The GNSO Council shares the concern expressed by some of the other GNSO SG/Cs to shorten the public forum. If it is split in two, it may be difficult for communities to develop positions / comments early in the meeting, as these are usually the result of the discussions held throughout the week. The GNSO Council supports the proposal from the RySG that 'a number of pilot tests based on community suggestions be conducted of Public Forum formats and evaluated in order to understand the best format and timeframe for the public forum that meets the expectations of the community.
7. The GNSO Council fully supports the recognition that 'steps should also be taken to keep track of recurring attendees to support easing of future visa attainment for attendees' as on numerous occasions GNSO community members (including GNSO Councilors) have not been able to attend as a result of visa issues.
8. Finally, we note that the MSWG does not recommend restricting meeting locations to "hub" cities. Given the significant travel time and expense involved in attending ICANN events, we ask that, at a minimum, the MSGW recommend that Staff be 'strongly encouraged' to consider hub cities, and giving them priority over other candidate locations.

In line with comment number #6, the MSWG and/or Board may want to consider instead of wholesale implementing all of these changes at once, to first pilot some of these concepts and proposals to ensure that issues can be identified at an early stage and course corrections implemented to ensure that going forward ICANN meetings 'support broad, informed participation and reflect the functional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Internet at all levels of policy development and decision-making' (as the identified purpose of the new strategy in the MSWG report).

Again, the GNSO Council would like to thank you for your hard work and we remain available to discuss and/or clarify any of our comments.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Robinson
Chair, ICANN GNSO Council